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Message Text

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14
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 IO-11 SAM-01 SAB-01 EA-07 /094 W
---------- 046974
R 271030Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3827
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 0211

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TC, SA, MUS
SUBJ: ABU DHABI-SAUDI-OMAN BORDER

REF: A. MUSCAT 053, B. 75 ABU DHABI 2059, C. 75 MUSCAT 1104

1. IN NUTSHELL, WE BELIEVE NEW ABU DHABI-SAUDI BORDER WESTWARD FROM UM ZUMUL, INCLUDING UNDERSTANDING ON DISPOSITION OF OIL IN ZARRARA/AL-SHAIBA FIELD, IS FAIRLY SOLID, BUT THAT QUESTION OF BORDER NORTHWARDS FROM UM ZUMUL TO BURAIMI IS STILL UP IN THE AIR.

2. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, 1974 ABU DHABI-SAUDI BORDER AGREEMENT HAS BEEN BOTH INITIALLED AND SIGNED. LAST WE HEARD, CONTRACT HAD BEEN SIGNED WITH JAPANESE FIRM TO DEMARCATE NEW BORDER ON GROUND. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS WORK HAS BEGUN, OR WHETHER POSSIBLY FIRM HAS BEEN ASKED TO SUSPEND OPERATIONS PENDING CLARIFICATION OF SEGMENT OF BORDER INVOLVING OMAN.

3. WITH RESPECT TO BORDER RUNNING NORTHWARDS TO BURAIMI, STORY WE GET HERE IS THAT ABU DHABI NEGOTIATORS (MAHDI TAJIR IN PARTICULAR IS BLAMED FOR THIS) ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE TALKED BY SAUDIS INTO REDRAWING THIS SEGMENT OF LINE. SAUDIS INITIALLY TOLD THEM NOT TO WORRY--THEY WOULD FIX IT WITH OMANIS. ABU
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DHABIANS DUTIFULLY WAITED, BUT WHEN NOTHING SEEMED TO BE

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HAPPENING THEY BEGAN PRESSING SAG TO RESOLVE MATTER. FOREIGN
MINISTER SUWAIDI TOLD US SOME TIME BACK HE HAD FORMALLY PROPOSED
TO SAUDIS THAT 1974 AGREEMENT BE AMENDED TO LEAVE UM ZUMUL-BURAIMI
BORDER AS IT WAS: SAUDIS COULD THEN DISCUSS WITH OMANIS ADJUSTMENT
OF THEIR BORDER WITH OMAN IF THEY WISHED, BUT ABU DHABI WOULD BE
LEFT OUT OF IT. FEW DAYS AGO SUWAIDI TOLD AMBASSADOR HE HAS
URGED SAUDIS TO CALL THREE-WAY CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS PROBLEM.
SUWAIDI BELIEVES SAUDIS ARE RECEPTIVE TO IDEA, BUT SO FAR THEY HAVE
TAKEN NO ACTION. GOVERNMENT HERE IS CLEARLY FRUSTRATED AT SAUDI
UNWILLINGNESS OR INABILITY TO COME TO GRIPS WITH MATTER.

4. IN MEANTIME, ARRIVAL JAN 12 OF FIRST TWO TDY MEMBERS OF BUREAU
OF RECLAMATION DAM STUDY TEAM HAS PRODUCED INTERESTING REACTION
HERE WHICH IS CLEARLY REFLECTION OF CONTINUING DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN
OMAN AND ABU DHABI OVER BORDER IN BURAIMI AREA. IN MEETING JAN 13
WITH ALI SHURAFA, DIRECTOR PRESIDENTIAL DIWAN, TO INTRODUCE EXPERTS,
SHURAFA TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HE THOUGHT DETAILED INVESTIGATION
POTENTIAL SITES IN AL-AIN AREA WOULD
PERHAPS HAVE TO WAIT A BIT. HE NOTED BORDER QUESTION
STILL HAD TO BE CLARIFIED AND STATED SPECIFICALLY THAT SAUDIS
STILL CLAIMING SUBSTANTIAL AREA (ON MOST MAPS LABELED OMANI
TERRITORY) ADJACENT TO ABU DHABI IN THIS REGION. SHURAFA STATED
THAT PROBLEM "BEING WORKED ON" AND HE HOPED IT WOULD "SOON"
BE RESOLVED, BUT IN MEANTIME PERHAPS EXPERTS SHOULD CONCEN-
TRATE ON NORTHERN EMIRATES. SUBSEQUENTLY IN MEETINGS AT TECH-
NICAL LEVELS AND IN TRIP TO AL-AIN EXPERTS FOUND SENSITIVITIES
CONFIRMED.

5. QUERIED ABOUT THIS SITUATION AS IT AFFECTED OUR EXPERTS, SUWAIDI
CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR WEEK AGO THAT THERE HAD BEEN PERIODIC
FLARE-UPS OF TROUBLE BETWEEN ABU DHABI AND OMANI AUTHORITIES
OVER LAND AND WATER RIGHTS IN AL-AIN/BURAIMI AREA.
SUWAIDI DESCRIBED INCIDENTS AS MINOR, INVOLVING "FEW METERS" OF LAND
AND INSTANCES WHEN ABU DHABI DRILLING FOR WATER HAD DAMAGED
OMANI IRRIGATION CANALS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT DISPUTES
WOULD BE RESOLVED TO EVERYBODY'S SATISFACTION FAIRLY SOON.
DCM FOLLOWED UP WITH MFA UNDER SECRETARY ABDULLAH MAZRU'I
JAN 27 AND WAS TOLD UAE AND OMAN TEAMS BEGINNING THAT SAME
DAY TO TRY TO DEFINE SPECIFIC BORDER POINTS IN AL-AIN/
BURAIMI. MAZRU'I WAS FRANKLY LESS THAN OPTIMISTIC THAT EXISTING
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DIFFERENCES WOULD BE EASILY RESOLVED.
STERNER

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